

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

MASTER SERGEANT KENNETH NATHANIEL MACK

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I wish today to honor the life and service of a dedicated marine, MSG Kenneth Nathaniel Mack. On May 5th, 2007, Master Sergeant Mack gave his life in service to his country fighting in Iraq. In his 23 years of service to the U.S. Marine Corps, Master Sergeant Mack proved himself a dedicated marine and a trusted colleague to all who served by his side.

Born in Goldsboro, NC, on December 18, 1964, Kenneth's family soon moved to Texas, where he graduated from Southwest High School in 1982 and attended Tarrant County Junior College in Fort Worth.

While still in college, Master Sergeant Mack joined the Marine Corps Reserves, following his love of country, as well as his interest in automotive repair work. While many of his fellow students considered weekends simply a time to relax, Kenneth chose to spend many of those weekends at military drill in Abilene. In 1991, Kenneth was called upon to serve his country in combat during Operation Desert Storm. It would not be the last time he served on a far-away field of battle.

Following the conclusion of the first gulf war, Kenneth returned home, married his wife Peggie, and started his family. Like so many members of our Nation's Reserve forces, Kenneth worked hard to balance his military service and civilian job with his family life. He succeeded, as evidenced by the lasting legacy of love and compassion that he left behind with his family. He cherished his time with them and was known for always bringing the family together.

In 2004, Kenneth was once again called to serve overseas and deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. After helping to liberate the Iraqi people from an oppressive government regime, Master Sergeant Mack returned home. In March of 2007, he answered his country's call for the third time, returning to serve in Iraq. Sadly, just a few short months later, Master Sergeant Mack was killed by an improvised explosive device while conducting combat operations there.

In honor of his service and his selfless sacrifice, Congress passed legislation earlier this year naming the Wedgwood Station Post Office the "Master Sergeant Kenneth N. Mack Post Office Building." Master Sergeant Mack will be remembered across Texas for his generosity and loving attitude towards children, which extended well beyond his own family. He will also be remembered for his enthusiasm for hobbies such as scuba diving, skydiving, and motorcycle riding; and his love for the U.S. Marine Corps.

MSG Kenneth Mack is survived by his wife, Peggie; his children, Candace, Courtney, Shyquadra, and Nathaniel; his mother, Mahalia S. Mack; and his brothers, Timothy and Robert. It is my honor today to share Kenneth's story,

and pay tribute to his remarkable service and sacrifice for this country, which shall be forever indebted to him.

FEDERAL STUDENT LOANS

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, just last week Congress passed a 1-year extension of the Department of Education initiative to buy back student loans from lenders who have difficulties accessing capital in the tight financial market. I was pleased to support the extension of this program which has injected more than \$1 billion in capital to lenders and has had a hand in ensuring students have access to federally guaranteed student loans in the 2008–2009 school year.

However, the continued need for the Federal Government to prop up student lenders, many of which already operate at a profit, concerns me. Companies making loans through the federally guaranteed program already receive generous subsidies and a guarantee of 95 percent of the value of the loan. While extending the buyback program for another year will provide stability in the student lending market for the 2009–2010 school year, it raises the question of how much Federal funding is too much when there is a cheaper alternative that offers the same Federal loans to students.

That alternative is the direct loan program which issues the same federally guaranteed student loans without reliance on banks and lenders. In addition to cutting out the middleman, the direct loan program is far cheaper for the government to administer. According to the President's most recent budget, the cost to the taxpayer per loan through the direct loan program is \$.77 compared to \$5.25 through the FFEL program.

Iowa State University, the University of Iowa, University of Northern Iowa, Kirkwood Community College, Des Moines Area Community College, and many other Iowa colleges, all issue loans through the direct loan program. I continue to hear from students and financial aid administrators at those schools that the program serves them well. An added benefit of the direct loan program is that in these troubled economic times students at direct loan schools receive their student loans without the worry of whether their lender will be there for them next year. Any college worried about loan availability for their students should immediately sign up for the direct loan program.

But the problem is deeper than any one school or lender. As our economy continues to falter and the cost of college rises, we owe it to our young people and their parents to provide student aid that is reliable, efficient and comprehensive. The Federal student loan program is one of the best investments our country can make. It should be a priority to provide those loans in the most fiscally responsible way possible.

CHINA'S DOUBLE TEN NATIONAL DAY

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I rise today to congratulate Taiwan President Ma Ying-jeou and Ambassador Jason Yuan on celebrating China's Double Ten National Day.

The people of Taiwan should be proud of their freedom, their political system, and Taiwan's strong economy. With good schools, excellent health facilities, and a sophisticated transit system, Taiwan is a model of development for the region. National Day affords us the opportunity to reflect on those successes.

In addition, I want to recognize Taiwan's ongoing efforts to strengthen its ties with China and its continual commitment to constructive relationships with democratic nations throughout the world. Taiwan and the United States have enjoyed a very positive partnership through the years—a relationship that I am confident will continue to benefit our respective citizens.

On this Chinese National Day, I again offer my congratulations to the Taiwanese government and people for their past success and send my best wishes for this year's celebration.

TRIBUTE TO BILL GATES, SR.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize Bill Gates, Sr.'s contributions to civic programs and initiatives that have changed the lives of many in our home State of Washington and across the country. On Friday September 26, 2008, the University of Washington will be holding an event to honor Bill Gates, Sr. and it is my pleasure to share my sincere gratitude to Bill Gates, Sr. for his extensive civic engagement and accomplishments.

Bill Gates, Sr. has a long history of serving others. First as an Eagle Scout and later serving in the U.S. Army during World War II, Bill Gates, Sr. made a conscious choice to lead by example. Bill Gates, Sr. has dedicated his time and efforts to numerous organizations that strive to improve the lives of individuals and families across the Nation and world. His active leadership roles in organizations such as the United Way of King County and the United Way of America; local and national boards of Planned Parenthood; and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation are just a few examples of his passion and commitment to helping others.

As a fellow education advocate, I appreciate the work Bill Gates, Sr. has done to increase the ability of our youth to access and afford a quality education. Bill Gates, Sr. clearly understands the importance of education and he has worked on this issue from many angles: as a chair of a Seattle Public School Levy Campaign, a member of the Board of Regents for the University of Washington, and as cochair of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Bill Gates, Sr. is an integral part of decisions made about influential

education initiatives. Recently, Bill Gates, Sr. chaired a \$2 billion capital campaign for the University of Washington that included funding for the Husky Promise, which supports an endowment to help lower income students access higher education and attend the University of Washington.

Bill Gates, Sr. has also worked to advance projects that provide support for individuals and families in need around the world. As chair of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Bill Gates, Sr. has helped launch initiatives that tackle major health and poverty issues for the developing world. The initiatives have focused on practical solutions that empower international communities and help save lives.

I would like to thank Bill Gates, Sr. for both his past activities and his current pursuits to help create healthier and happier communities. I am sure Bill Gates, Sr. will continue to embrace the opportunities and challenges of tomorrow through his work with many charitable organizations, and I am pleased he is being honored for his years of dedication to helping others.

IDAHOANS SPEAK OUT ON HIGH ENERGY PRICES

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, in mid-June, I asked Idahoans to share with me how high energy prices are affecting their lives, and they responded by the hundreds. The stories, numbering well over 1,000, are heartbreaking and touching. To respect their efforts, I am submitting every e-mail sent to me through an address set up specifically for this purpose to the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. This is not an issue that will be easily resolved, but it is one that deserves immediate and serious attention, and Idahoans deserve to be heard. Their stories not only detail their struggles to meet everyday expenses, but also have suggestions and recommendations as to what Congress can do now to tackle this problem and find solutions that last beyond today. I ask unanimous consent to have today's letters printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

Thank you for your vote to stop the cap and trade thing, but it will come back with [a new president. We would be better off to be] drilling the deep reserves of the Williston Basin (more oil than Saudi Arabia in Dakota farmers fields) or the ANWR 5,000 acres or 5 million acres, or off shore where the Chinese will soon have rigs. We would be gearing up like the moon landing to get oil out of our coal whose estimated reserves are five times all the oil ever pulled out of the Middle East. . . . or the even more vast oil shales of Colorado or the tar sands. We would be building nuclear reactors and starting up those on moth balls right now . . . or better building refineries or making the hydrogen car that GM already has. Or how about this: All Of The Above.

But we are stuck [because of money influence] and nothing will change.

DENNIS.

Will It Ever End?

I have several examples of how the energy cost is driving my life.

1. High propane cost has increased my heating cost to an increase of over \$600 more this year. Propane has had a large increase and now is over \$3 per gallon. Five years ago it was under .60 cents per gallon. Propane is a by product of gas exploration. I feel this is a very large price for a by-product.

2. The government rating for mileage rate is at 50.5 per mile. Why have they not raised this? Gas prices soar, but the rate stays the same.

3. Thanks for the stimulus check. I just wish I could have used it to buy something extra.

4. Diesel prices are out of control. Why is diesel almost a dollar more a gallon than gas?

5. Just about the time you feel you are getting somewhere, someone takes more of your income. It is no wonder people are losing houses and entering into get rich adventures. (Lottery, gambling)

B.

This is the third email that I have sent over the past few months on this subject, and my message this time will be short and succinct—reducing speed limits is among the quickest solutions to help us in addressing the current issues with fuel pricing. Highway fuel consumption can be cut considerably (perhaps by as much as 20%—depending on the engine) by lowering speed limits. This is only a part of the solution. We also need to step up efforts on many fronts including utilizing more domestic resources, pushing the development of renewable energy sources and providing incentives to reduce energy consumption (i.e.—building smaller, more energy efficient homes that utilize solar/wind/geothermal energy). It is a complex challenge requiring strong leadership.

This brand of leadership will require some to act without regard for political ramifications (courage)—We are looking to you to provide your share of that leadership.

RICH.

You and your fellow congressman are a little late to help with this energy problem as we are at peak oil and prices will continue to rise. I am totally amazed at Congress's lack of action on coming forth with a sensible energy program.

JAMES.

Thank you for this opportunity to discuss my concerns. Higher gas prices have forced my family to reduce times spent together. We have to drive, because of very little public transportation. I would support your efforts for the oil companies to build more refineries. Every time one goes down for "maintenance," we get burned. Let them use their profits to build them. I think we need to force auto companies to build more efficient cars. We need more good choices for higher mpg autos, not just one per auto company. As a side note, we need to start a federal public works program. Get people employed and get our bridges/roads, schools, libraries, etc. rebuilt. This would stimulate our economy more than Bush's tax break plan. We need authority to install toll booths on our interstate highways to help keep them maintained. I think we are ready for nuclear energy at INL. The time is right. We need leaders in Congress, not Republicans or Democrats. Can you be one? Thanks again for this opportunity.

JOHN, Boise.

I had to take a medical disability from my job of 24 years as my health was getting so bad. My husband is 69 years old and I am 64. We find when we go to the grocery store we

have to decide whether we should buy groceries or put gas in our tank so we can get home if we can buy groceries. We cannot afford to sell our house and move into town. We have no public transportation for five miles, I am trying to help my daughter with her children as she had to go back to work and I can get them to the Mall on public transportation but we would have to walk the five or six miles to get the rest of the way to my house. Our utilities are getting out of sight also and just the necessities in food are more than our Social Security and other bills allow. And then they want to give our Social Security to illegal aliens who have never worked and paid into it. My Grandmother had worked for years and when she applied they told her she was a quarter short to collect S.S., but we can give it to people who have never worked or paid into it? What are we supposed to do when we have our hands tied and no one wants to help back there and you are our only hope because you pass the laws and we have to live with them. Please help us as there are so many things they can use as alternative fuel and they seem to drag their feet about it. We have all kinds of weeds we will donate for the purpose of alternative fuel.

NANCY.

The cost of energy is devastating to seniors on a fixed income such as me.

JERRY, Idaho Falls.

I want to thank you for the opportunity to address my views on the situation we are in, not only in Idaho, the United States but the entire world. The affects of high energy prices will continue until Wall Street speculators are stopped. The auto manufacturers here in the United States and abroad have been given every opportunity to produce high efficient automobiles for decades. They have failed. Congress has [not acted to create] mass transit high speed transportation from coast to coast. The technology has been here for many decades with nothing being done in Washington D.C.

What are we to do with the waste from nuclear energy plants? I believe that technologies for coal, wind and solar should be explored. We should be exploring technologies of our ocean's salt water as a useful solution to our energy situation. We need qualified people to manage our water and other natural resources here in Idaho and throughout the world.

If Congress would only work together for the betterment of mankind. These are but a few of our hopes and dreams for the future of our existence.

Thank you, Senator Crapo, for your efforts in Congress and for this consideration.

GREG, Pocatello.

Sorry Mr. Crapo, but I do not agree with you about your vote against the climate change legislation.

In 2000, I recall paying between \$.99 and \$1.09 for gas for many months in Boise, occasionally a little more, but in that range. Now, eight years later, we are paying 400% more. The administration has refused during this time to get involved in the Kyoto agreements and only just in the last year or so acknowledged that climate change was even real, but attacked and prevented the science that warned us of it throughout his term. Gasoline prices going up 400% in Boise in the past eight years is painful, but it is caused by many factors, mostly, I believe, due to rich people getting insanely richer at the expense of the rest of the world. Meanwhile, we still do very little to protect against the disastrous consequences of global warming.

So, if we are going to be subjected to 400% increases and do nothing but make the rich